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The Kipchak Tribe of Jeti-Kashka in the History of Central Asia

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Abstract. This article investigates the history of the Jeti-Qashqa tribal group. The formation of this tribal group is associated with the emergence of the Kyrgyz tribal union, whose early structure is reflected in the sixteenth-century work "Majmuʿ al-Tawarikh" by Sayf al-Din Akhsikenti. This source describes the composition of the Kyrgyz tribes, presenting their principal groupings through accounts of tribal progenitors as murids (disciples) of the head of the Ishqiyya dervish order, Shaykh Sayyid Mir Jalil. The first person in this list of murids is the head of the Jeti-Qashqa tribe, Aq-Timur Qipchaq, who arrived from the locality of Qulan and was accompanied by his seven sons - Dawlati-Yar, Khuda-Yar, Berdi, ʿAli-Yar, Musa-Yar, ʿIsa-Yar, and Tule-Yar. The narrative then describes the arrival of the progenitors of the principal Kyrgyz tribal associations, accompanied by those of individual tribes. The work specifies that the Jeti-Qashqa shared a common origin with the tribes of the "Qaraqarin" Qipchaqs, whose leader was the legendary Kyrgyz epic hero, the batyr Manas. Notably, in the contemporary genealogical nomenclature of the Kyrgyz, the Jeti-Qashqa tribal group is not associated with the Qipchaqs; rather, it forms part of the Solto and Basyz tribes. From the early 1840s, during the rise of the tribal union known as the "Ferghana Qipchaqs" in the Khanate of Kokand, the Iti-Qashqa are recorded as one of its large constituent groups. Alongside the Qulan, Ulmas, Ilyatan, and Yashiq tribes, they played a significant role in the political events of the region. Representatives of the Jeti-Qashqa became part of the administrative elite of the Khanate of Kokand; Mulla Khalbek was awarded the rank of qushbegi and held the highest administrative and political office, that of mingbashi (mingbāshī). An analysis of the components of the ethnonym Jeti-Qashqa demonstrates that its first component, "jeti," i.e., "seven," possessed a special, sacred significance in Turkic cultural tradition. In the history of nomadic peoples, the numeral "seven" reflects the completion of a cycle in the formation of tribal unions. For instance, the Kimak union consisted of seven tribes. There are also references to the seven Rong tribes, the seven tribes of the Mohe people, the union of the seven Magyar tribes, and other similar formations. The term "jeti" itself derives from the verb "jet", meaning "to reach"; the development "jet-di > jeti" is associated with the meaning "achieved, ready". The second part of the two-part ethnonym Jeti-Qashqa is associated with the designation of a leader or military commander in the historical administrative terminology of the Oirat, Kyrgyz, Altai, and Khakas peoples.
Keywords: Qipchaqs; Kyrgyz; Jeti-Qashqa; Qashqa; Ulmas; Qulan; Qaraqara; Khanate of Kokand; Ferghana Qipchaqs

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Орталық Азия тарихындағы қыпшақ Жети-Кашка тайпасыа

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Аңдатпа. Осы мақаланың мақсаты жеті-қашқа рулық-тайпалық тобының тарихын зерттеу болып табылады. Бұл рулық-тайпалық топтың қалыптасуы қырғыз тайпалар одағының құрылуымен байланыстырылады, оның ерте құрылымы XVI ғасырдағы дереккөзде – Сайф ад-Дин Ахсикентидің "Маджму ат-Тауарих" шығармасында көрініс тапқан. Онда қырғыз тайпаларының құрамы сипатталып, олардың негізгі бірлестіктері тайпа аталарының Ишкия дәруіштер орденінің басшысы шейх Саййид Мырза Жәлілге мюрид ретінде ұсынылуы түрінде көрсетіледі. Осы мюридтер тізімінде бірінші болып Құлан жерінен келген жеті-қашқа тайпасының басшысы Ақ-Темір Қыпшақ көрсетіледі, оны жеті ұлы – Даулети-Йар, Худа-Йар, Берді, Әлі-Йар, Мұса-Йар, Иса-Йар және Төле-Йар ертіп келеді. Әрі қарай негізгі қырғыз рулық-тайпалық бірлестіктерінің аталары жекелеген тайпалардың аталарымен бірге келеді. Шығармада жеті-қашқалар "қарқаралық" қыпшақтар тайпаларымен бір текті болғаны нақтыланады, олардың көсемі ретінде аты аңызға айналған қырғыз эпостық батыры Манас болған. Айта кетерлігі, қырғыздардың қазіргі генеалогиялық номенклатурасында жеті-қашқа рулық-тайпалық тобы қыпшақтармен байланыстырылмайды, ол солто және басыз тайпаларының құрамына кіреді. Қоқан хандығының тарихында XIX ғасырдың 40-жылдарының басынан бастап "ферғаналық қыпшақтар" деп аталатын тайпалар бірлестігінің өрлеу кезеңінде олардың құрамында ірі рулық-тайпалық топ иты-қашқа тіркеледі. Құлан, Ұлмас, Илятан және Ящик тайпаларымен қатар олар өңірдің саяси оқиғаларында елеулі рөл атқарды. Жеті-қашқа өкілдері Қоқан хандығының басқарушы элитасының бөлігіне айналды, Молла Халбек күшбегі атағына ие болып, жоғары әкімшілік-саяси "мыңбасы" лауазымын атқарды. Жеті-қашқа этнонимінің құрамдас бөліктерін талдау оның бірінші компоненті "жеті", яғни "жеті" саны түркі мәдени дәстүрінде ерекше, қасиетті мәнге ие болғанын көрсетеді. Көшпелі халықтардың тарихында "жеті" саны рулық-тайпалық бірлестіктердің қалыптасуының аяқталған циклдік процесін бейнелейді. Мысалы, қимақ одағы жеті тайпадан тұрған. Сондай-ақ жундардың жеті тайпасы, мохэ халқының жеті тайпасы, жеті мадьяр тайпасының одағы және басқа да ұқсас құрылымдар аталады. "Жеті / jeti" терминінің өзі "jet" – "жету" етістігінен шыққан, мұнда "jet-di > jeti" "жетті, дайын" деп аударылады. Жеті-қашқа екі құрамды этнонимінің екінші бөлігі ойрат, қырғыз, алтай және хақас халықтарының әкімшілік-тарихи терминологиясындағы көсемнің немесе қолбасшының атауымен байланыстырылады.

Түйін сөздер: қыпшақтар; қырғыздар; жеті-қашқа; қашқа; ұлмас; құлан; қарқара; Қоқан хандығы; ферғаналық қыпшақтар

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Кыпчакское племя жети-кашка в истории

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Аннотация. Целью настоящей статьи является исследование истории родоплеменной группы жети-кашка. Образование этой родоплеменной группы связывается с формированием кыргызского союза племен, ранняя структура которого нашла свое отражение в источнике XVI века – сочинении "Маджму ат-Таварих" Сайф ад-Дина Ахсикенти. В нем описывается состав кыргызских племен с указанием их основных объединений в форме представления родоначальников племен как мюридов главе дервишского ордена Ишкия шейху Саййид Мир Джалилу. Первым в этом списке мюридов указывается прибывший из местности Кулан глава племени жети-кашка Ак-Тимур Кипчак, которого сопровождают семь его сыновей – Даулати-Йар, Худа-Йар, Берды, Али-Йар, Муса-Йар, Иса-Йар и Туле-Йар. Далее прибывают родоначальники основных кыргызских родоплеменных объединений вместе с родоначальниками отдельных племен. В сочинении уточняется, что жети-кашка были одного происхождения с племенами "каркаринских" кыпчаков, в качестве вождя которых выступал легендарный кыргызский эпический герой батыр Манас. Примечательно, что в современной генеалогической номенклатуре кыргызов родоплеменная группа жети-кашка не связана с кыпчаками, она входит в состав племен солто и басыз. В истории Кокандского ханства с начала 40-х годов XIX века, в период возвышения объединения племен так называемых "ферганских кыпчаков", в их составе фиксируется крупная родоплеменная группа иты-кашка. Наряду с племенами кулан, ульмас, илятан и ящик, они играли существенную роль в политических событиях региона. Представители жети-кашка стали частью управленческой элиты Кокандского ханства, Мулла Халбек был удостоен звания кушбеги и занимал высшую административно-политическую должность "минбаши". Анализ компонентов этнонима жети-кашка показывает, что его первый компонент "жети", т.е. "семь", в тюркской культурной традиции имел особое, сакральное значение. В истории кочевых народов цифра "семь" отображает законченный циклический процесс формирования родоплеменных объединений. К примеру, кимакский союз состоял из семи племен. Упоминаются также семь племен жунов, семь племен народа мохэ, союз семи мадьярских племен и другие подобные образования. Сам термин "жети/ jeti" происходит от глагола "jet" – "достигать", здесь "jet-di > jeti" переводится как "достигнуто, готово". Вторая часть двухсоставного этнонима жети-кашка связывается с наименованием предводителя или военачальника в административно-исторической терминологии ойратского, кыргызского, алтайского и хакасского народов.

Ключевые слова: кыпчаки; кыргызы; жети-кашка; кашка; ульмас; кулан; каркара; Кокандское ханство; ферганские кыпчаки

Introduction

An ethnic union of Qipchaq tribes played a significant role in the history of the Khanate of Kokand. These tribes inhabited the foothills of the eastern part of the Ferghana Valley. The union was centred in the locality of “Iki-Su arasy,” i.e., the interfluve of the Qara-Darya and the Naryn. According to V. Nalivkin, the Ferghana Qipchaqs were the most combat-ready troops

in the Khanate of Kokand, and their principal tribes were the Qulan, Ulmas, Ilyatan, Yashiq, and Iti-Qashqa (Nalivkin 1886: 155). The ascendancy of the Qipchaq tribes in the Khanate of Kokand occurred in the mid-nineteenth century. According to the anonymous work "Mirʾat al-Futuḥ", the Qipchaq tribe seized power during this period and established its dominance over the urban estate and the Kyrgyz tribes (Nabiev 1973: 33). The Jeti-Qashqa tribal group at that time was one of the major tribes of the Ferghana Qipchaqs. In the manuscript "Jang-nama-yi Khudayar-Khani" by Mulla Shamsi, the influential leaders of this tribe are named as Mulla Khalbek parwanachi and Muḥammad-Yar dadkhwah; the manuscript also reports that representatives of the Jeti-Qashqa ruled Namangan for seven years and nearly destroyed Shahrikhan. Subsequently, Mulla Khalbek became the highest military official of the khanate – mingbashi – and was also granted the rank of qushbegi. He carried out a series of administrative reforms in the khanate (Nabiev 1973: 34, 40).

This article examines the history of the Jeti-Qashqa tribal group, which is associated with the Kyrgyz and the Ferghana Qipchaqs.

Materials and Methods

This study draws on a diverse body of sources, particularly the following historical chronicles: "Zubdat al-Fikra fi Taʾrikh al-Hijra" ("The Cream of Reflection Concerning the Chronicle of the Hijra") by Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Manṣuri; "Kitab al-ʿIbar wa Diwan al-Mubtadaʾ wa-l-Khabar fi Ayyam al-ʿArab wa-l-ʿAjam wa-l-Barbar wa man ʿAṣarahum min Dhawi al-Sulṭan al-Akbar" ("The Book of Admonitions and the Compendium of Origins and Reports Concerning the Deeds of the Arabs, Persians, and Berbers, and Those of Their Contemporaries Who Were Bearers of Supreme Authority") by Wali al-Din ʿAbd al-Raḥman Ibn Khaldun; "Ansab al-Salaṭin wa Tawarikh al-Khawaqin" ("Genealogies of the Sultans and Histories of the Khaqans") by Mirza ʿAlim Tashkandi; "Muntakhab al-Tawarikh" ("Selection from the Chronicles") by Muḥammad Ḥakim-Khan; "Hidayat-nama" ("The Book of Guidance on the Path of True Faith") by Mir Khal al-Din; the anonymous work "Mirʾat al-Futuḥ" ("The Mirror of Victories"); "Taʾrikh-i Jahan-nama-yi" ("The Chronicle of the Mirror of the World") by ʿAwaz Muḥammad ʿAṭṭar Khuqandi; "Jang-nama-yi Khudayar-Khani" ("The Book of the Battle of Khudayar-Khan") by Mulla Shamsi (Shawqi); "Majmuʿ al-Tawarikh" ("The Collection of Reports") by Sayf al-Din Akhsikenti; as well as other sources. The study relies on the comparative-historical method to identify elements of common origin in the cultures of different Eurasian peoples. Word-formation, or morphological, analysis is also used to reconstruct the original form of the ethnonym Jeti-Qashqa.

Literature Review

There are currently no studies devoted specifically to the history of the Jeti-Qashqa tribal group, with the exception of an article by R. A. Abdumanapov (Abdumanapov 2023: 3–10). However, information on the Jeti-Qashqa is presented in studies examining various historical aspects connected with the work "Majmuʿ al-Tawarikh", as well as in works devoted to the history of the Kyrgyz and Qipchaq tribes. The connection of the Jeti-Qashqa with the Kyrgyz and the epic hero Manas was first noted by A. T. Tagirdzhanov in the publication of a photographic reproduction of fragments of the manuscript text (Sobranie svedenii … 1960: 26), and is also examined in V. A. Romodin's commentaries on the work of V. V. Bartold (Bartold 1963: 517,

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541). Aspects of the history of the Jeti-Qashqa tribal group are examined in the studies of K. Sh. Shaniiazov (Shaniiazov 1974: 104–117), T. K. Beisembiev (Beisembiev 1987: 23), S. M. Abramzon (Abramzon 1990: 55–57), V. V. Ushnitskii (Ushnitskii 2020: 260; Ushnitskii 2026), T. A. Akerov (Akerov 2012: 16–17; Akerov 2014: 309), and other authors.

Results

The earliest mention of the Jeti-Qashqa tribal group occurs in the sixteenth-century work "Majmuʿ al-Tawarikh", the main part of which was written by Sayf al-Din Akhsikenti (Akhsikenti 1973; Sayf al-Din 2016). The work states that the Jeti-Qashqa Qipchaqs, headed by Aq-Timur Qipchaq, resided in the region of Ulmas-Qulan. The seven sons of Aq-Timur Qipchaq "rode out on seven grey horses with white patches on their foreheads" (Akhsikenti 1973: 207; Sayf al-Din 2016: 76). The work thus explains the two-part name of the group by linking "jeti" to the seven sons of Aq-Timur Qipchaq and "qashqa" to the white patches on their horses' foreheads.

The first component of the ethnonym may be compared with the designation of one of the largest tribes of the pre-Mongol period — the "Yeta" tribe, mentioned in the list of Qipchaq tribes in the work of Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Manṣuri, "Zubdat al-Fikra fi Taʾrikh al-Hijra", or "Seta" in the work of Wali al-Din ʿAbd al-Raḥman Ibn Khaldun, "Kitab al-ʿIbar wa Diwan al-Mubtadaʾ wa-l-Khabar fi Ayyam al-ʿArab wa-l-ʿAjam wa-l-Barbar wa man ʿAṣarahum min Dhawi al-Sulṭan al-Akbar" ("The Book of Admonitions and the Compendium of Origins and Reports Concerning the Deeds of the Arabs, Persians, and Berbers, and Those of Their Contemporaries Who Were Bearers of Supreme Authority") (Tizengauzen 1884: 540–541). The variant names "Yeta" and "Seta", i.e., "jeti" – "seven," reflect the division of this Qipchaq tribe into seven constituent groups.

The practice of using the numeral "seven" among nomadic peoples often carried a special sacred meaning, denoting the final stage in the formation of a particular community. In the famous inscription in honour of Kül-Tegin, a sequence based on the number seven appears: seventeen men > seventy men > seven hundred men, marking the establishment of the khaganate as an independent state of the Türk-Tukue. The inscription states: *"Heaven, guiding my father Ilterish-Khagan and my mother Ilbilgya-Katun from its (heavenly — here and below, notes by S. Malov) heights, raised them (above the people). My father the khagan set out (at first) with seventeen men. Having heard the news that he was wandering outside (i.e., beyond the then dwelling-place of the Türks), the inhabitants of the cities went up into the mountains, and the inhabitants of the mountains descended, and, having gathered, formed (a detachment of) seventy men. Since Heaven granted (them) strength, the army of my father the khagan was like a wolf, and his enemies were like sheep. Leading his army forward (i.e., east) and backward (i.e., west), he gathered and supported the people (i.e., provided the rebels with resources), until their number had reached seven hundred men. When (they) numbered seven hundred men, he organised and trained the people who had lost their 'el' (i.e., their independent state structure) and their khagan, the people whose women and men had been enslaved (by the Tabghach), who had abolished (their) Türkic institutions, (this very people) he organised and instructed according to the institutions of my ancestors; then he organised the Tölis and Tardush peoples and appointed the yaghu and the shad"* (Malov 1951: 37–38).

In the Ongin runic inscription, "jeti eren" – "seven Oghuz leaders" – are mentioned, as they are in the Tibetan manuscript Pelliot tibétain 1283 (P.T. 1283 –R.A.): "*...Further to the north*

live seven tribes of Je-dre. They have no common sovereign. They are in constant conflict with the Khors (Uyghurs – note by Yu. Zuev). Their tents are covered with birch bark. Instead of wine they drink birch sap, which they draw from the trees as if milking them. The country is especially difficult to reach from the gorges" (Zuev 2012: 43).

According to Chinese sources, in 627 "7 wan" of the Se-Yanto/Sir tribe, i.e., 7 tumens or 70,000 people, migrated eastward (Zuev 2012: 41). These 7 tumens became the military foundation of the Sir Khaganate created on the territory of present-day Mongolia. Yu. A. Zuev also notes the sevenfold system of tribal organisation among the Tatars of Inner Mongolia as described by Rashid al-Din – "seventy thousand dwellings" – as well as among the Nogai Yedisans – "the seventy-thousanders" (Zuev 2012: 41). He likewise suggests that part of the Se-Yanto migrated to the Khingan region and formed the group known as the Shiwei si qing – "the seven Shiwei tribes," also called Tatars (Zuev 2012: 42).

The structural significance of the number seven is also reflected in the legend of the formation of the Kimak Khaganate: *"The origin of the Kimaks is as follows. The chief of the Tatars died and left two sons; the elder son took possession of the kingdom, and the younger, named Shad, began to envy his brother. He unsuccessfully attempted to kill his elder brother; fearing for his own safety, he took with him a slave girl who was his lover, fled from his brother, and arrived at a place where there was a great river, many trees, and an abundance of game; there he pitched a tent and settled. Every day this man and the slave girl went out together to hunt, ate game, and made clothing for themselves from the fur of sables, squirrels, and ermines. After this, seven Tatar kinsmen came to them: Imi, Imek, Tatar, Bayander, Kipchak, Lanikaz, and Ajlad. These people tended their masters' horse herds; in those places where (previously) the herds had been, no pastures remained; seeking grass, they came to the area where Shad was living. Seeing them, the slave girl came out and said: 'Irtysh,' i.e., 'stop'; hence the river received the name Irtysh. Recognising that slave girl, all stopped and pitched their tents. Shad, having returned, brought with him a large quantity of game from the hunt and fed them; they remained there until winter. When snow fell, they could not return; there was much grass there, and they spent the whole winter there. When the land blossomed and the snow melted, they sent one man to the Tatar camp so that he might bring news of that tribe. On arriving, he saw that the entire area had been devastated and depopulated: an enemy had come, plundered, and slaughtered all the people. The survivors of the tribe descended from the mountains to this man; he told his friends about Shad's circumstances; all of them set off for the Irtysh. Having arrived there, they acknowledged Shad as their chief and began to show him honour. Other people, having heard this news, also began to come (there); seven hundred people gathered. For a long time, they remained in the service of Shad; later, when their numbers had grown, they dispersed among the mountains and formed seven tribes, named after the seven men..."* (Gardizi 1897: 105–106). Here, too, we find a similar sequence: seven men > seven hundred men > seven subdivisions, this time marking the formation of the Kimak tribal union.

Also known are the seven tribes of the Mohe people – the ancestors of the Jurchens and Manchus: Sumo Mohe, Heishui Mohe, Baishan Mohe, Gudo Mohe, Anchegu Mohe, Fune Mohe, and Haoshi Mohe (Shavkunov 1968: 30).

The oldest Chinese dictionary, the "Er-ya", lists the neighbours of the Zhou state, including the Qi Rong – "seven Rong tribes" – whom A. G. Malyavkin associates with proto-Tibetan tribes in the eastern part of what is now the Chinese province of Gansu (Malyavkin 1981: 137).

In 884, the seven tribes of the "Dentumoger" – the "seven Magyars" – headed by seven elders, the "Hetumoger," became the basis of the emerging Hungarian people (Erdeli 1967: 174). Significantly, according to the anonymous Hungarian chronicler, after the battle with the Ruthenians and Cumans near Kiev, "seven Cuman leaders" joined the Hungarians (Erdeli 1967: 175). As M. K. Yurasov rightly argues, the text of the chronicle refers to the Pechenegs, since the Cumans (Polovtsians) appeared on the borders of Rus' only in 1050 (Yurasov 2013: 73–74).

As noted above, according to Rashid al-Din, the Tatar tribe consisted of seventy thousand houses or families (Rashid al-Din 1952: 101). He also describes the Yenisei Kyrgyz, among whom the respected and prominent clan "Idi" is mentioned, which is compared with the designation Idi/Yetti/Jeti: *"In these regions there are many cities and villages, and the nomads are numerous. The title of [each] of their sovereigns, whatever other name he may have, is inal, and the clan name of those of this region who enjoy respect and renown is Idi"* (Rashid al-Din 1952: 150). According to the hypothesis of L. P. Potapov, members of the Altai seok dyeti-sary ("seven yellow" — note by R.A.) were descendants of the Yenisei Kyrgyz. He writes that "the Jesar, Desar, or Eser of the Russian historical documents of the seventeenth century," i.e., the Yenisei Kyrgyz of the Iser ulus, after the disintegration of the latter, migrated to the Altai and formed the Altai seok dyeti-sary (Potapov 1969: 34). The Iser ulus of the Yenisei Kyrgyz was located "in the steppe regions along the left bank of the Yenisei River, from the Erba River southward to the mouth of the Uybat River" (Abdykalykov 1968: 8). According to the hypothesis of V. Ya. Butanaev, the designation "Isar (Ezer, Jeser, Elisar) ulus... probably derives from the Khongor 'issarkhy' – inner (or perhaps 'iskerki' – eastern?)" (Butanaev, Khudyakov 2000: 156). V. Ya. Butanaev's hypothesis concerning the etymology of the name of the Eser ulus from the Khakas terms "issarkhy" or "iskerki" is refuted by L. P. Potapov's reference, mentioned above, to the Jeser ulus in Russian historical documents.

According to the manuscript "Majmuʿ al-Tawarikh", the padishah or head of the people "Qara Yetti" was Ön-Khan (Akerov 2017: 36). In Abulghazi-Khan's account of the Kereit people, their origin is linked to an ancestor who had seven dark-complexioned sons – Qara-It. Abulghazi-Khan translates the term as "dark-complexioned", disregarding its second component, "it", which is undoubtedly connected with the numeral "seven" (Rodoslovnaya Istoriya 1768: 150) [Genealogical History 1768: 150].

The seven mythical clans known as "yette uruq" form the foundation of the Dolan people. According to E. R. Tenishev, the word yette is equivalent to the Mongolian numeral seven – "dolan" (Tenishev 1965: 95; Reshetov 2008: 184).

The number seven appears in legends about the origins of the Khalkha, Mongolia's principal ethnic group, in the motifs of "seven khoshuns" and "seven generations" (Vladimirtsov 2002: 427).

Traditions concerning the Chuy Qipchaqs among the Altaians record seven subdivisions: ak, kyzyl kös, jayat, tumat, ködönchi, moyinchi, jalchi (Ekeev 2005: 96). According to another legend, the sons of a certain Tokpok from the Yabogan valley gave rise to seven Qipchaq clans of the Altaians – koton, targa, ködenchi, yalchi, sary (in the text of the legend "yellow Qipchaq" – R.A.), kyskash, and kazak (Ekeev 2005: 98).

The clan cətti pörü – "seven wolves" – is recorded among the Shors. The eponymous Itiber volost was one of the 26 Shor inorodcheskie volosts (administrative districts for non-Russian populations) (Dyrenkova 2012: 112).

G. N. Potanin cites an Altai tradition concerning the formation of the seok telös: *"The actual name of the telös is jity tas, i.e., seven bald ones. When the seoks (bones) were being divided, that is, when the Altai people were dividing into seoks, seven brothers who had bald spots on their heads did not receive a bone (seok). They were nicknamed 'seven bald ones'"* (Potapov 1987: 56). The terms "tas" and "qashqa" share a semantic basis in such meanings as "having bald patches," "having a mark on the head," "bald," etc. The clan "taz" forms part of the Kyrgyz Qipchaqs.

In the Nogai epic "Edige," the "Mangyt el" of Edige was an association of 70 men: "One night Edige arrived and pitched his tents. He made his seventy men ride past this guard on seventy horses of seventy different coat colours" (Edige 2016: 200).

The sacred significance of the numeral "seven" among Turkic peoples reflects a broad range of concepts. According to E. R. Tenishev, it figures in the religious beliefs of different faiths, astronomical terminology and concepts, folklore narratives, proverbs and sayings, descriptions of kinship relationships within certain limits, and references to folk customs. It also signifies abundance, completeness, and the perfection of events (Sravnitel'no-istoricheskaia grammatika 2006: 633). In the opinion of R. T. Muratova, "in the Bashkir language, as in other Turkic languages, the number ete 'seven' has strong sacred connotations. In terms of frequency and range of use, the number ete 'seven' occupies a special place among numbers" (Muratova 2010: 106). E. Koichubaev suggests that the numeral jeti (seven) conveys the notion of "multitude" (Sultanov 2006: 133).

In the present case, it also reflects the completion of a cycle in which nomadic communities form tribal unions. Significantly, according to the hypothesis proposed by M. Hartmann and M. Räsänen, the Turkic word "jeti" derives from the verb jet — "to reach"; jet-di > jeti "achieved, ready" (Sravnitel'no-istoricheskaia grammatika 1988: 169; Muratova 2011: 61-63) [Comparative-Historical Grammar 1988: 169]. Thus, the concepts of "achievement" and "readiness" are linked to the completion of the formation of a tribal or ethnic group.

It may therefore be supposed that the name Jeti-Qashqa is connected with the formation of a union of clan subdivisions that became part of the Ferghana Qipchaqs. In the manuscript "Majmuʿ al-Tawarikh", the formation of this subdivision is described within the broader structure of the Kyrgyz people as a union of related tribes, through the presentation of tribal progenitors as murids of Sayyid Mir Jalil, the head of the Ishqiyya dervish order: *"First, Aq-Timur Qipchaq arrived from Qulan with his seven sons and embarked on the path of spiritual perfection. His sons' names were: Dawlati-Yar, Khuda-Yar, Berdi, ʿAli-Yar, Musa-Yar, ʿIsa-Yar, Tule-Yar. They recognised Mawlana Aʿẓam as their mentor. The seven brothers rode out on seven grey horses with white patches on their foreheads. The seven brothers fought together in battle. For this reason, they were called 'Yeti Qashqa.' Yeti Qashqa and Qar(a)qara were of one and the same origin.*

Next, Aq Oghul arrived with his two sons – Otuz Oghul (and) Salus-Bek Bul(a)ghachi – embarked on the path of spiritual perfection, and displayed devotion. The sons of Bul(a)ghachi then arrived, recognised (Mir Jalil) as their mentor, and became his followers: Boston, Teit, Joo Kisek, Doolos, Khydyr-Shah, Kangdy. The sons of Otuz Oghul then arrived, recognised (Mir Jalil) as their mentor, and became his followers: Adine, Mungqush, Qara Baghysh, Tagai. Ku Oghul also arrived and became a follower, accompanied by his six sons: Basyz, Lalym Kushchi, Ai-Bash Munduz, Chong Baghysh, Saru(u), Sunjek Khytai" (Akhsikenti 1973: 207).

As noted above, the second component of the ethnonym "qashqa" designates a white patch on the head of a horse. The term qashqa also has the meaning "bek, military commander, leader."

According to V. A. Romodin, the term "qashqa" is of Turkic origin, since B. N. Pankratov concluded that it could not be explained on the basis of Mongolian languages (Bartold 1963: 517).

Writing in the late sixteenth century, Seyfi Chelebi describes the Central Asian Kyrgyz as follows: "This is a large tribe. They have no khan, but only beks, whom they call qashqa" (Seyfi 1994: 74). A special Khakas princely title "qashqa" is recorded in Russian historical documents of the seventeenth century; "the names of Khakas princes include Altynak Qashqa, Agalak Qashqa, Ulagach Qashqa, Sary Qashqa, and others" (Butanaev, Moldobaev 1988: 24). This term, with the meaning "leader," is also recorded in Oirat charters of the seventeenth century as part of the names of noble feudal lords – Ochin Qashqa, Tsoktu Khashka (Monraev 2012: 22).

This term was characteristic of the Kyrgyz (Yenisei and Central Asian Kyrgyz – R.A.) and Oirat historical administrative traditions. This is not surprising, considering that both the Yenisei and the Central Asian Kyrgyz belonged to Oirat polities. In the "Hidayat-nama", "Kyrgyz elders" are mentioned as sipahsalars (leaders – note by R.A.) of the "troops of the Kalmyks," i.e., the Oirats. The reference is specifically to the Central Asian Kyrgyz (Salakhetdinova 1961: 142). The Yenisei Kyrgyz were vassals of the Oirat kontaishas and maintained close ties with them through marriage. The wife of the influential Kyrgyz prince Kochebai was the sister of Khara-Khula (Abdykalykov 1968: 36–37) – one of the founders of the Dzungar Khanate (Zlatkin 1983: 74–98).

Olzhobai Karataev, a Kyrgyz scholar of sanjira (genealogical traditions), with reference to S. M. Abramzon (Karataev 2003: 71), identifies within the Kyrgyz Qipchaq tribe the subdivision jeti aigyr ("seven stallions" – R.A.). There is no doubt that this term is identical to the ethnonym "jeti qashqa," as both share a semantic core associated with horses. The subdivision jeti qashqa also forms part of the Kyrgyz tribes Solto and Basyz (Karataev 2003: 71). Moreover, subdivisions called jeti uruq, i.e., "seven clans", are also recorded among the Sarybagysh and Solto tribes, while among the Kytai and Saruu tribes there is a subdivision jeti uruu, i.e., "seven tribes" (Karataev 2003: 72). According to T. Abdyrakunov, the Qipchaqs of Jeti Qashqa correspond to the association "jeti kan," i.e., "seven khans," in the epic "Manas," since the term "qashqa" historically corresponds to the term "khan" (Abdrakunov 1990: 151).

According to "Majmuʿ al-Tawarikh", the formation of the Jeti-Qashqa tribal group took place among the Kyrgyz tribes. Aq-Timur Qipchaq and his sons were among the first to accept the spiritual guidance of Mawlana Aʿẓam Sayyid Mir Jalil. The dates of Sayyid Mir Jalil's life are unknown, but his son Muḥammad Qaḍi is known to have lived from 851 AH (1447–1448)[1] to 921 AH (1515–1516) (Sobranie istorii 1960: 7–8) [Collection of Histories 1960: 7–8]. Thus, these events may be dated to the fifteenth century. As noted above, the Jeti-Qashqa Qipchaqs and the Qaraqara Qipchaqs were "of one and the same origin," which indicates their close connection with the principal hero of the Kyrgyz epic, the batyr Manas. The Jeti-Qashqa are associated with the area of Qulan, which was probably the centre of the Qipchaq tribes' nomadic territory. By the time a separate polity centred on Kokand rose to prominence, the Qipchaqs already inhabited the foothills of the Ferghana Valley. It is known that during the reign of ʿAbd al-Karim Bi (who ruled Kokand from 1721 – note by R.A.), constant clashes occurred between the local sedentary population and the Qipchaqs. As a result, ʿAbd al-Karim Bi himself marched against the Qipchaqs, who had elected their fellow tribesman Shingai as khan. On the advice of the ḥakim of Gurumsay, Utai-Bakaul, negotiations were organised with the Qipchaqs; forty of their leaders who arrived in Namangan were treacherously killed, and the revolt was suppressed by the army of ʿAbd al-Karim Bi (Nalivkin 1886: 63–64).

In 1742, the Dzungar kontaisha Galdan-Tseren dispatched a 30,000-strong army into the Kokand domains, headed by the noyons Septen and Dagba (Moiseev 1991: 164–165). According to "Taʾrikh-i Jahan-nama-yi", during the Dzungar siege of Kokand, a young warrior from among the Qipchaqs fought alone against a large enemy detachment of Oirats for three days (Nabiev 1973: 33). This may be the same warrior mentioned in "Ansab al-Salaṭin wa Tawarikh al-Khawaqin", which tells of a certain warrior Batyr-Qipchaq who broke into the ranks of the Dzungar troops and personally killed many enemies before dying himself (Nalivkin 1886: 25). In the same work, in the account of the Oirat siege of the city of Kokand, a certain "young champion" is mentioned who "rode into the ranks of the Qipchaq-Kalmaks" (Tashkandi 1988: 316). This may be a scribal error or a mistranslation, since the Qipchaqs fought on the side of the Kokandis. However, as early as the second half of the seventeenth century, Kyrgyz tribal leaders, including Qipchaqs, acted as military commanders of the Oirat horde (Salakhetdinova 1961: 315). It is therefore possible that Ferghana Qipchaqs served in the Kokand army, while other Qipchaqs served in the Dzungar army. Another Ferghana Qipchaq mentioned in the sources is Qipchaq-Bachi, one of ʿAbd al-Karim's military commanders, who unsuccessfully took the field against the Dzungars in 1760 (Nalivkin 1886: 60).

Known representatives of the Jeti-Qashqa among the Ferghana Qipchaqs include Muḥammad-Yar dadkhwah and Mulla Khalbek parwanachi (Nabiev 1973: 34). According to Central Asian tradition, the parwanachi was responsible for delivering the ruler's yarliqs to the emirs of the khanate, while the dadkhwah presented petitions from aggrieved persons to the ruler and conveyed his replies to them (Semenov 1948: 147–148). In 1846, Mulla Khalbek parwanachi headed the faction of the Qipchaq nobility that opposed the all-powerful head of the Qipchaq tribe Qulan, Musulmanqul. After the latter's overthrow, Mulla Khalbek was appointed "mingbashi" — the highest military official of the khanate — and was granted the rank of qushbegi (Nabiev 1973: 34). He carried out an administrative reform of the khanate, began replacing senior officials, and formed a coalition with the old landowning nobility (Nabiev 1973: 40). In 1849, after the return to power of Musulmanqul, Mulla Khalbek was executed by Musulmanqul together with many prominent Qipchaq leaders (Nabiev 1973: 42). Court factions in the Khanate of Kokand were engaged in a continuous struggle for power, and fierce factional conflict also took place within the Ferghana Qipchaq community. According to the anonymous work "Mirʾat al-Futuḥ", it was precisely the mutual extermination of the Qipchaq nobility that marked the beginning of the decline of their power (Nabiev 1973: 42). Following their removal from power and the subsequent mass slaughter, a substantial proportion of the Qipchaqs moved to the Kyrgyz nomadic territories. This movement was facilitated by similarities in traditions, language, and culture, as well as by the presence among the Kyrgyz of a Qipchaq tribe that was large and influential at the time, whose members were often called Kyrgyz-Qipchaqs. In all probability, the Jeti-Qashqa tribal groups within the Kyrgyz tribes Solto and Basyz originated among the Ferghana Qipchaqs.

Conclusion

As "Majmuʿ al-Tawarikh" shows, the origin of the Qipchaq subdivision Jeti-Qashqa was connected with the Kyrgyz tribes. Related to the "Qaraqarin" Qipchaqs, the Jeti-Qashqa over time became part of the union of the Ferghana Qipchaqs. During the period of the Khanate

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of Kokand, the Jeti-Qashqa Qipchaqs became a large tribal group; Mulla Khalbek, who rose to prominence among them, was granted the rank of qushbegi and held the post of mingbashi. The two-part ethnonym of this tribal group is connected with two terms. The first part of the ethnonym, "jeti," i.e., "seven," had a sacred meaning, denoting the final stage of the formation of a particular community. The second part of the ethnonym, "qashqa," a term of Turkic origin, was used to mean "military commander" by the Yenisei and Tian Shan Kyrgyz, as well as by the Oirats.

Notes

1. Here and throughout the text, dates in the Islamic calendar are converted to the European calendar using the synchronistic tables of I. A. Orbeli (Orbeli 1941).

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